

WASHINGTON – Today, the Committee on House Administration's Subcommittee on Elections and the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties hosted a joint hearing on federal, state and local preparations for the 2008 General Election. According to election experts and consumer advocacy groups that testified before the committees, election officials, preparing for what they expect will be an unprecedented voter turnout this November, are struggling to detect fraudulent registrations submitted by third-party organizations.

Chief Public Advocate of the Consumers Rights League, James Terry, expressed specific concerns with the numerous reports of fraudulent activities committed by employees of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN). According to Terry, ACORN's "corruptive" voter registration activities include: falsifying addresses, names and social security numbers; registering deceased, underage and ineligible individuals; forging signatures; and submitting incomplete forms. In his testimony, Terry even referenced one 2008 Wisconsin case where ACORN representatives allegedly went so far as to bribe individuals with gift cards to persuade them to register. "ACORN's pattern of fraud can no longer be dismissed as a series of unfortunate events," Terry stated. "Rather than showing any signs of improvement, all signs point to increased lawbreaking."

Election administrators struggling with budget shortfalls and record voter turnout are also concerned with the registration practices by third-party organizations. Executive Director of the National Association of Election Officials, Doug Lewis, stated that, "the major abuses of 2004 and 2006 were a result of third-party voter registration efforts." According to Lewis, untimely delivery of registration forms by third-party organizations has "disenfranchised" voters. In his testimony, Lewis notes, "turning in tens of thousands of incomplete voter registration cards does a disservice to the individuals who would like to be voters."

For more information, please contact the Committee press office at (202) 225-8281.